



*Mississippi Gulf Coast
Bonsai Society*

February 2008

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www.msqulfcoastbonsai.org

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February 13	6:30, MSGC Bonsai Meeting, Long Beach
February 22-24	Gulf Coast Garden & Patio Show, MS Coast Coliseum, Biloxi, MS.
March 7, 8	Brussel's "Preview Sale", Olive Branch, MS
March 12	MSGCBS Meeting and Guy Guidrey Workshop, Diamondhead, MS.
March 15	ACBS "Day of Bonsai", St. Lukes Church Hall, Mobile, AL.
April 5	Edgewater Mall Horticultural Society Show, Biloxi, MS
April 9	MSGCBS Meeting and annual elections
April 19	ACBS Bonsai Show, Regional Library, Mobile, AL
May 23-25	Brussel's Rendezvous, Olive Branch, MS.
June 19-22	ABS National Convention Learning Seminars, San Antonio, TX.



**Ben Oki Workshop
Mobile Garden Center,
Mobile, AL.**

**L-R- Joe Kuhn,
Patrick LaNasa,
Ben Oki**

Photo courtesy of John Lee



Photo by John Lee

Ben Oki Workshop -January 19, 2008

Buck Lawrence, Joshua Richey and I had the pleasure of attending a Ben Oki workshop at the Garden Center in Mobile. We joined in on at least a dozen others from the host club, Azalea City Bonsai Society. A rain drenched Saturday morning, but Joe Kuhn, the president insured there was ample coffee and snacks available.

This annual event is linked to the BSF Master's Tour of the various bonsai clubs in Florida. Each year there are several well known bonsai artists leading these tours from Miami to points north and west in the state and Alabama. Usually, Ben Oki leads the way making Mobile his first stop on his tour. This year BSF reversed the route making Mobile last.

Not sure when Ben Oki started this tradition. Long before I moved down here from the west coast. I've enjoyed Ben's workshop in January every year since '02. Also enjoyed a memorable workshop in Santa Barbara when he and John Naka accomplished a duel workshop in '82, my first full year in bonsai and the first time I met Ben Oki. I wish my tree and my interest in bonsai had lasted as long as Ben's drawing. It's now in my scrapbook along with several of his other drawings.

A Ben Oki workshop is special even for a viewer. Participants bring their own trees, bonsai or pre bonsai, and most viewers bring a camera and/or notebook.

Ben works quietly and efficiently designing, pruning, bending, turning, and wiring. Generally the tree's owner sits close by ready to assist Ben if called to. Mostly it's conferring on the style or the tree's history and removing the accumulated brush that steadily falls from the tree. Usually, the more branches that drop to the table the more "oohhh's" are uniformly uttered from the audience. At last, all see and admire the finished product. Not unlike the artist who chisels away the unwanted marble to create a masterpiece, Ben's talented and experienced hands and eyes create a future masterpiece.

That Saturday in Mobile he saw a future bonsai from the absolute raw material I brought to Mobile, a nursery five gallon Juniperus prostrata with a thick, twisted trunk. A successful bid at the last ACBS auction. Underneath all that foliage I suspected a potential bonsai tree but honestly couldn't visualize a decent design.

After more than half of the original shrub fell to the floor we began to see Ben's vision- a double trunk informal upright. From a nursery Prostrate juniper shrub to the beginning of a bonsai tree, clipped, pruned, wired, twisted and styled, all in the span of about 25 minutes. Because of the ideal difference between the height and caliper of the two trunks and the graceful, serpentine silhouette offered this one could rightfully be called a mother-daughter tree.

Two days later the mother and daughter are doing fine in an oval mica training pot with a promise of nebari. I'll keep it in the shade for about two weeks and out of the wind and occasional freeze 'til ole man winter departs. Here's hoping I have another worthwhile challenge for Ben Oki next January.

Next Meeting - February 13

Our February meeting will be a regular meeting at the MSGC Community College, the new Multi Purpose Bldg. at 6:30. Suggest using the side entrance.

Our January meeting was, not rudely, but firmly, shut down after 15 minutes. Because of Registration Day the school closed early. Our intended program was a slide show and a critique of winter trees. This will be our February meeting.

There will be a brief business meeting to discuss the upcoming garden and patio show and then on to the distribution of some donated pots followed by a slide show. The next club get together will be at the Diamondhead Community Center on March 12 for a Guy Guidrey workshop. Map/ directions will be provided in the March Newsletter. There will be no regular meeting in March.

Also, this will be our last chance to organize the set up for the upcoming Garden and Patio show at the Coast Coliseum in Biloxi. This event is scheduled for three days, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, Feb. 22-24. It would be great if each of us took advantage of talking to the public about bonsai as they visit the complementary booth. I'll be on hand all three days. If each of you took a three hour stand at the booth it would be easier to handle the crowds, answer more questions and possibly add to our membership rolls. Norman Winter, Show Chairman from MSU, called me to ask if I'd give a talk on bonsai. The time slot is 9:45 Saturday morning, Feb. 23. Norman is also placing some public inserts in the Sun Herald and will include a brief summary of our club's history.

Among the many nurseries represented at the show will be a bonsai nursery from the Atlanta area, selling bonsai and Chinese figurines.

If any of you can't make the meeting but want to participate in the show call me before the meeting to set up a time/ date that fits your schedule.

March Meeting - March 12

Guy Guidrey, owner of Bonsai Northshore, Inc., Covington, La. will conduct a bonsai workshop in Diamondhead. This will be the first appearance of Guy at one of our functions and I know we'll all be looking forward to it. As with previous workshops the fee for bringing a tree is \$20 and viewer participation is \$3.

Guy will critique the tree as it is and project the future presentation. After guiding and suggesting style, etc., the tree's owner will then trim and wire as needed. Bring tools and wire.

This workshop will be in lieu of our regular meeting at the Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College in Long Beach.

Since this will our last opportunity to organize for the Edgewater Horticultural Society Show on April 5th a short business meeting will precede Guy's presentation.

Day of Bonsai - March 15

The 2008 ACBS "Day of Bonsai" will be held at the St. Lukes Church Auditorium on the corner of Azalea and Japonica (980 Azalea Rd.) in Mobile.

After an introduction to the plant display Joe Day will present "Focus on Southern Style"- elements involved in creating oak, cypress and pine cypress.

Leo Fortner will follow up with a program demonstrating the use of a computer in designing virtual bonsai. From a photograph of a subject tree Leo will (on screen) style, trim, even create jin and shari and if he wants, change his mind and change the style, size, etc. All without harming the subject tree.

Next up on the program John Lee will demonstrate developing bald cypress quickly. John Lee presented an excellent program on the Serissa species and its many varieties last year.

Last on the program will be a workshop with dwarf live oaks. The size of the plant material will be four foot nursery stock. The fee is \$45 and there are only ten trees available. Early registration is suggested.

Price of admission to the Day of Bonsai (does not include workshop fee) is \$30 per individual or \$40 per family. To reserve a live oak workshop slot email ACBSBonsai@aol.com.



Photo by Patrick LaNasa

Buck Lawrence standing next to one of Guy Guidrey's Bald Cypress trees in his bonsai nursery in Covington, Louisiana. As many times as I've visited this nursery, including the previous location in Covington, there was always at least one other expertly trained bald cypress that wasn't there the previous time. I hope to see, in the near future, his tree in the U.S National Bonsai collection in Washington, D.C.

Guy trained under Vaughn Banting over twenty years ago and has owned his successful bonsai business for over ten years. And, he in turn, has trained others in his nursery during the "Let's get wired" seminars and demonstrations and workshops at the Greater New Orleans Bonsai Society, national and international bonsai conventions as well as many bonsai clubs around the world.

Rendezvous -2008

Another Memorial Day weekend in Olive Branch, Mississippi. Brussel's Bonsai Nursery annual affair gets better each year. The inclusive dates this year are May 23rd through the 25th.

So many bonsai happenings this year and just so much discretionary funds (rat hole money) available.

The named exotic bonsai artists from around the globe to entice us this year include Cheng Cheng-Kong from Taiwan, Marc Noelanders from Belgium, Jose L. Rodriquez from Puerto Rico, Suthin Sukosolvisit from Boston and the perennial favorite Kathy Shaner from San Jose, California. Credentials are too numerous to list here.

If interested in this event suggest registering before April 1st and save \$50.

Food by way of catered lunches, continental breakfasts and a Southern Dinner on Saturday night. I attended two of these annual events and I guarantee you I didn't lose weight. Except in my wallet. The many greenhouses are purposely filled with thousands of tempting bonsai. Did I mention Brussels is the largest bonsai nursery in the US of A? For more details go to www.brusselsbonsai.com and click on rendezvous on the home page.

Odds and Ends

- Wound sealers. Most if not all of us use sealers. I've tried cut paste in a jar and Kiyonal pruning compound in a tube. Neither of these products seems to stop the eventual fungus on deadwood after needed branch removal in softwood subjects like Bougainvillea. About three months ago I tried a wound sealer named C105 Topsin M. It has a consistency like a toothpaste gel and colored a bright orange. All the labeling is in Japanese. Been told it has a fungicide in the formula. The wounds on my Bougainvilleas are $\frac{1}{4}$ " up to $1\frac{1}{2}$ ". Previously I treated the wounds with lime sulfur, allowing the wound to dry thoroughly and then apply the wound sealer paste. But fungus would reappear in two weeks or a little more. After 3 months the wounds treated with this Topsin product show no signs of fungus and the treatment is transparent (after a week) unlike the other wound sealers I've tried.

There are 13 other commercial wound sealers available (Dallas Bonsai Co.) and I've yet to try them. But this seems to be a winner. This is not an endorsement, just an experience.

- "The purpose of the accent plant or companion plants is to provide an additional visual point which will accent some aspect of the Bonsai. The accent should give a secondary emphasis only, and should never be in fierce competition with the primary Bonsai. In other words, contrasts are introduced, while still retaining harmony and balance in the composition". From "Treeview", *The Eastern Bonsai Society, South Africa, 1982.*

Patrick LaMasa, Newsletter Editor

Mississippi Gulf Coast Bonsai Society

Membership Application Form

Send this page to the treasurer with your dues for the April 2008- April 2009 year.

Make checks payable to Treasurer Lauralee Reugger,

102 Big Pine Drive, Covington, La., 70433.

Individual membership \$25 (circle choice) Family membership \$30 (circle choice)

Name(S) _____

Street Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Home Phone _____ **Cell Phone** _____

Email Address _____